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## RACE IMPROVEMENT BY CONTROL OF DEFECTIVES (NEGATIVE EUGENICS)

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For ten years and a half I had charge of a large school for imbeciles, where I had passing through my hands in that time more than 2,000 feeble-minded people of various ages from 5 years to 45, so what I shall say about defectives is not theoretical, but is founded on personal observation and first-hand knowledge.

It is quite possible to over-estimate the effects of heredity. We must admit, with Weismann and others, as well as with Darwin in his later life, that acquired traits are not transmissible. But it is also clear that traits which originate by variation are transmitted, and we can prove that environment is at least one of the important factors in variation.

When we are considering heredity from the viewpoint of the sociologist I think we may reasonably give it a slightly wider scope than belongs to it in the strictly physiological sense. As sociologists we may consider the effects on the child, not only of the strict physiologic heredity, which is complete at the moment of conception, but also of the influences which act during gestation and in the earliest period of infancy. Strictly speaking, these influences are part of the environment, but they so closely resemble hereditary influences that sociologically we may consider them as practically inseparable from them.

We find many families in which a vicious taint may be seen coming down from generation to generation, modified in given instances by environment. It varies in its form of expression which is sometimes like that in the parent and often different. It differs in different members of the same family, brothers and sisters. Children of epileptics may be idiotic or insane, or have one of a dozen different neuroses. Sometimes the taint appears to skip one generation, reappearing in the next. If in mating degenerates were restricted to degenerates the degenerative tendency would probably die out with the decadent family. But unfortunately the

defective blood is continuously reinforced by strong, if vicious, blood from outside its own ranks. Probably if the idiotic, insane, epileptic and feeble-minded could be deported and placed together on an island in the Pacific and left to themselves, the degenerate race would die out in two or three generations. The mothers of most of the next generation of feeble-minded and idiotic are such themselves; but most of the fathers are strong-minded. This is the most powerful argument that I know of, for the protection of the feeble-minded from the passions of vicious men and from the effects of their own weakness.

I do not present to you anything in the nature of an academic discussion. I desire to offer an exceedingly practical proposition. There is a certain positive piece of state business to be done by the American people with regard to the degenerate classes. I believe it is well within the power of the people of each state to do that state's share. I admit that it is a tremendous piece of work, but we are not afraid of large undertakings.

This is an era of big things being done. We take a few miles of sand dunes by the lake side and transform them in a year or two into a city of 100,000 people surrounding a steel plant which manufactures many million dollars' worth of steel annually. We have no doubt of our ability to do any big thing that ought to be done.

The feeble-minded, idiotic and insane, or certain classes of them, are certainly vitiating and lowering the average standard of the race. The total number of them is not so large as we sometimes fear. Of the epileptics we have a pretty accurate estimate. About one in 500 of the population in Europe, and in America the number is very nearly the same, or one-fifth of one per cent of the population, are epileptics. The feeble-minded we have not so accurately estimated, but I think the number is about the same, perhaps not quite so many. Many of the epileptic are also feeble-minded. Many are strong-minded. Julius Cæsar, Mahomet, Napoleon Bonaparte were supposed to be, and perhaps were, epileptic.

Of the insane the number is not far different. I think if we could count the insane, the epileptic and the feeble-minded we should find the total to be not more than one-half or two-thirds of one per cent of the total population, surely not a number to inspire terror in the strong-minded remainder.

Add to this number the weak, shiftless people always on the verge of pauperism and continually falling over into it, especially the numerous mothers of illegitimate children, women so nearly feeble-minded that you are not quite certain whether or not they should be detained in custody, who, under our wretched pauper system, or want of system, are continually in and out of the almshouses, coming in pregnant, bearing a child, going out leaving the child behind, and coming back soon again in the same condition, clearly degenerate, evidently hopeless, the mothers of the Jukes and their like.

Still, with all these added, the total would not be so tremendous, not more than we can handle, and we do something with them now. Our present inefficient semi-neglect of them is costly. For their own sake and that of the body politic we ought to take some positive method to control the whole class and to make their reproduction impossible. For it seems certain that, unhindered, their natural increase, since it is not affected by the restraints of prudence and self-control, is more rapid than that of the general body of normal citizens.

Four remedies have been offered for the increase of the degenerates:

First, restrictive marriage laws. A few states restrict the marriages of insane and idiots. I know only one which goes so far as to control the feeble-minded and epileptic. That is Connecticut. But the laws are not heeded to any great extent. I think if the laws in regard to idiocy were carried out further, and if the general public could be educated up to the point of view of those who have studied the subject, as to the exceeding horror and odiousness of such a marriage, they might have some effect. But restrictive marriage laws have never been largely successful. The typical instances have been those of Austria and Sweden, each of which countries tried to diminish poverty by such laws. The net results were a great increase in immorality and in the number of illegitimate births. In this country, as elsewhere, many of the degenerates are born outside the marriage bond.

McKim in his book on "Heredity and Social Progress" declares we must eliminate the degenerate by a humane and painless death—have same pleasant lethal chamber into which they may be introduced, lie down to happy dreams and never waken. It is not

worth while discussing that, not even as an academic discussion, it is so tremendously far away. What the results would be I do not like to contemplate. What horrible degradation would ensue; what desperate changes in human character would result; how far down we would go toward or below the morals of Greece and Rome when the citizen was nothing and the state everything. I do not propose to argue that question before you.

The next plan is of the same kind, but differs in degree,—sterilization. I do not care to discuss that either. It also would be nothing but an academic discussion. Those who propose it, propose it for the people from whom there is or should be the least danger, the incorrigible criminals, who certainly should be retained in custody for life, and the hopeless idiot. In my own state, Indiana, I am ashamed to say, an ingenious method of sterilization has been introduced which would seem to foster and encourage sensuality by promising immunity from some of the dangers which usually attend it. I consider it a most serious and dangerous attack on public morals. It has been introduced by people who are entirely well-meaning and who would not wittingly do anything against religion and ethics. I regret that it is becoming popular and that people in other states desire to copy it. When I talk against it I feel like the voice of one crying in the wilderness, or like that Wisdom which, we are told, cries aloud on the streets and no man regardeth her.

I think these plans are futile. I think neither restrictive marriage laws, elimination by a painless death, nor wholesale sterilization can be applied, at any rate within the next generation or two, so as to have any serious effect in the reduction of the number of the degenerate classes. But I think a process can be applied, and is now being applied, partially, in many states, with remarkable success, that is entirely within our power to apply thoroughly. I think that the whole class of the feeble-minded and the epileptic, say two-fifths of one per cent of the whole population, may be at once segregated and taken into permanent, maternal care by the good Mother State. I think that such care can be exercised upon them as will not only make their miserable lives much less miserable than they are, but make most of them positively happy. It is quite possible and practicable to establish, in every state in the Union, orderly celibate communities, segregated from the body politic;

set off by themselves on land selected for the purpose, in buildings constructed to some extent by their own hands, where the feeble-minded people, and the epileptic people, and the chronically insane people may be cared for permanently, and a large part of them made entirely self-supporting. I do not know how large a part are capable of self-support under due control. A friend of mine who had charge of a large institution in which he had been successfully treating feeble-minded and epileptics, used to say eighty per cent of the total number could be made self-supporting. I thought his claim rather too high. But from my own experience I am confident that sixty per cent of the total number of the feeble-minded could be made self-supporting. What does it mean—self-supporting. It does not mean that a feeble-minded man can do a full ordinary man's work. If so, he would be three times self-supporting. Any man, given steady work, in a civilized community, can earn a living for himself, his wife and his family. He can surely earn the living in a moderate way of three adults. Therefore if my insane, epileptic or feeble-minded laborer does one-third of one man's work, or just enough over a third to pay for the extra supervision he requires because he is feeble-minded, then he is entitled to be called and he is, a self-supporting member of the community. I have had hundreds of such people under my care. I am going to tell you of just one group of such laborers, out of many instances of which I know, because I want to clinch my argument with some facts of experience.

I discovered on our colony farm, two miles away from the main institution, that we had an extensive deposit of excellent brick clay. Now, feeble-minded and epileptic people, properly managed, are usually willing workers, and I was always on the lookout for industries for those in my charge. I did not know any more about making bricks than the ordinary man, but I began in a cheap and tentative way and gradually increased the plant until I had a brickyard which employed twenty-seven to thirty feeble-minded boys, ages eighteen to thirty years, working under two strong-minded men. We turned out, for several years, a million bricks annually. They were worth \$5.00 per thousand, and they cost the state about \$2.00 per thousand to make.

Among the brickmakers were five or six of those we call high-grade imbeciles, boys with whom you might have to converse

for five minutes before you could discover their defectiveness. There were a dozen or more of the middle-grade and eight or nine idiots who could not talk at all, but could earn their living shoveling clay into a wagon.

Now, in the simple homely fashion in which we lived on that farm, clad in summer in blue denim and in winter in any kind of warm clothes no matter how patched, if clean, fed on simple wholesome food and plenty of it, with no ostentation nor extravagance for inmates or care-takers, the gross cost of the support of these boys was only \$110.00 per annum per capita. But when we deducted from that \$110.00 the value of the hay, milk, potatoes, pork, apples and other farm products, raised on the colony farm and sent down to the parent institution, the net cost was only \$69.00 per capita. The thirty brick-makers earned \$3,000 in the brick-making season of eight months, which was considerably more than their net cost for a year.

We could easily have sold all the bricks we made at a higher price than I have quoted above, but instead we held them until the legislature helped us to put them into houses to receive more imbeciles.

As to the produce of our gardens and orchards, when we had more than we could use in the colony or at the parent institution, with its 1,000 inmates and 200 employees, we had good customers for our surplus in the other state institutions which were not so favorably situated, without invading the usual arteries of commerce.

Now, farm life and labor is but one of the many available industries for the feeble-minded, insane and epileptic. The great institutions for the latter at Bielefeld, Germany, and Sonyea, N. Y., have shown that there are abundant possibilities of profitable occupation for every one of them.

The class of defectives that has the strongest appeal to our sympathies is that of the feeble-minded women. When we neglect them we are exposing them to dreadful danger. Women physically, they are only babies in intellect and self-control. We say to these children, not in words but in deeds, as we say to many of the normal children of the slums: "You must be virtuous. Virtue requires strength, for it means choosing the right and rejecting the wrong. You have only strength enough to be innocent, but you shall be virtuous or you shall be damned." Now, the feeble-minded

girl, only strong enough to be innocent, must be protected in her innocence, for she cannot protect herself.

I have not made a very careful estimate of the necessary initial expense of the plan I propose. I know it will amount to a large sum. Perhaps for the whole country, divided among the different states, as much as the cost of five or even six battleships. Perhaps as much as Mr. Carnegie's libraries have cost him. Perhaps twice as much as the amount of the fine which the Standard Oil Company did not pay.

But whatever the cost, the expenditure should be made, for it would certainly be an excellent investment. From the day we had corralled and properly cared for all the present stock of degenerates the burdens of the citizens would begin to lighten, not only those of feeble-mindedness, epilepsy and insanity, although the results would be seen there the most rapidly, but the burdens of pauperism, drunkenness, the dreadful things which come from prostitution, all those evils which we regard as such a serious menace to us, which add to the burden of the hard-working, underpaid taxpayer, the man who pays high rent for a city tenement, the man who pays taxes on his little farm. So hard it seems sometimes to pay those taxes to support people he has not much interest in. It would relieve all those burdens more quickly than anything else you could do. I think it is practical and sensible. It is not a new scheme. Many of the states are doing it a little. Enough is being done to clearly indicate the proper method for the whole work.

In my state we have five hospitals for the insane and we are building a sixth. We have one institution for the feeble-minded and we have begun one for the epileptic. We have about equal numbers of insane and epileptic. In this country we provide fairly good care for about eighty per cent of all the insane. We provide for about fifteen per cent of the idiotic and epileptic something like fairly good care, and the danger to the body politic is ten times as great from the latter class as from the former.

We fear the insane and despise the idiot. So we give the insane care and the idiot neglect, while in nine times out of ten the danger to us is much greater from the idiot. The danger of increase is extremely great from the idiotic and from the insane relatively little.

Every man and woman ought to read the presidential address



of the last National Conference of Charities and Correction, entitled "The Burden of Feeble-Mindedness." The president, very familiar with the work being done for the feeble-minded, told in a plain, simple way the exact facts, and showed how this feeble-mindedness, or degeneracy, affects not only insanity, idiocy and epilepsy,—not only those diseases of the mind or malformations of the brain, but also affects every other form of trouble. It affects the educational problem, the crime problem, and, more or less, nearly all our social problems. In an appendix are given statistics of a great many families of degenerates and the degrees of heredity which occur in them are shown. When you have read that address you will realize the need of the plan I propose or of some other and better one.

For the classes I have named I think public opinion is ready to approve and endorse some such plan as I suggest. There are other classes for which we shall be ready when we are completely doing the work which we have already begun. What these next classes will be I am not prepared to say. Perhaps the chronic drunkards may be among them; certainly the habitual tramp will be and other classes of paupers, besides the one I have described.

I do not offer a panacea for the ills of society. Possibly positive eugenics, the conscious selection of the best types for reproduction may come some day. Possibly, probably, it will never come. But for the important step in negative eugenics which I have briefly described, I believe the world is ready, nay is impatiently, waiting.